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STATE FOR AF/S JNAMDE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/31/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [ZA](#)

SUBJECT: ZAMBIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS RENEW PROTESTS
WHILE GOVERNMENT GOES ON OFFENSIVE

REF: A. LUSAKA 689

[1](#)B. LUSAKA 693

Classified By: Ambassador Donald E. Booth for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) rallied November 6 to protest the Zambian government's (GRZ) failure to appeal former president Frederick Chiluba's corruption case; to review their failure to make headway in their campaign for an appeal; and to develop a coordinated action plan. Transparency International Zambia (TIZ) Executive Director Goodwell Lungu told about 130 attendees that the CSOs will continue to press for an appeal and asked them for "proactive strategies" to engage the GRZ. NGO Caritas Zambia Executive Director Frederick Nabanda reported that his team had already commenced gathering signatures for a public petition to President Rupiah Banda demanding an appeal. The CSOs endorsed a proposal by NGO Citizen Forum Executive Director Simon Kabanda to launch a new campaign of protest-by-whistling -- in contrast to the previous strategy of honking and whistling -- every Friday at 17:00 (ref A). Following the rally, EmbOff observed attendees blowing whistles provided by CSOs in the streets and asking bystanders to press the GRZ for appeal.

[1](#)2. (C) Ignoring the CSOs' protest, Vice President George Kunda asserted that NGOs are public entities subject to public scrutiny that should account for their finances. Minister of Home Affairs Lameck Mangani announced that two unnamed CSO officials involved in the protest allegedly embezzled over USD 29,600 (148 million kwacha) from donors, implying, once again, that donors are bankrolling the opposition. Mangani said, "The police would not sit and watch the NGOs set Zambia on fire using funds received from foreign donors." TIZ' Lungu challenged the government November 8 to arrest the suspects and welcomed transparency in NGOs as well as government. The CSOs' renewed campaign received a lukewarm response from the independent press and some civic leaders. The Post accused CSOs November 9 of losing public support over "failed acquittal protests," citing criticisms by former University of Zambia Students Union president Antonio Mwanza that CSOs held too many press conferences and too few protests.

[1](#)3. (SBU) COMMENT: The CSOs face an onerous task rekindling support for their anti-corruption efforts in the face of an increasingly defensive GRZ, skeptical press, and a resigned public. They lost crucial momentum when they agreed October 6 to call off their honking-and-whistling campaign (ref B). The CSOs have thus far not shown the wherewithal to mobilize sustained civic action. As a result, their latest campaign appears to be a face-saving measure to placate their supporters with little prospect of coercing the GRZ into appealing Chiluba's case. Minister Mangani's allegations of embezzlement and donor involvement seem intended to discredit the NGOs/CSOs in the public's mind and to warn donors against

getting involved, respectively. We plan to raise Mangani's inflammatory and unfounded allegations about "donor" activities with the MFA. END COMMENT.
BOOTH